



December/January Newsletter

Information Resource Center (IRC)

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Happy New Year!

From all of us at
the American Cultural
Center

Obama's State of the Union Address

President outlines domestic, international priorities for 2010



THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

January 27, 2010

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

U.S. Capitol
9:11 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Madam Speaker, Vice President Biden,
members of Congress, distinguished guests, and fellow

Americans:

Our Constitution declares that from time to time, the President shall give to Congress information about the state of our union. For 220 years, our leaders have fulfilled this duty. They've done so during periods of prosperity and tranquility. And they've done so in the midst of war and depression; at moments of great strife and great struggle.

It's tempting to look back on these moments and assume that our progress was inevitable -- that America was always destined to succeed. But when the Union was turned back at Bull Run, and the Allies first landed at Omaha Beach, victory was very much in doubt. When the market crashed on Black Tuesday, and civil rights marchers were beaten on Bloody Sunday, the future was anything but certain. These were the times that tested the courage of our convictions, and the strength of our union. And despite all our divisions and disagreements, our hesitations and our fears, America prevailed because we chose to move forward as one nation, as one people.

Again, we are tested. And again, we must answer history's call. [Full Transcript](#)

مقتطفات من خطاب الرئيس باراك أوباما عن حالة الاتحاد

السيدة رئيس مجلس النواب، نائب الرئيس بايدن، أعضاء الكونغرس، الضيوف المحترمين، مواطني
الأميركيين:

ينص دستورنا على أن يقدم الرئيس من وقت إلى آخر معلومات للكونغرس عن حالة الاتحاد. وقد دأب قادتنا
على أداء هذا الواجب طيلة مئتين وعشرين سنة. وقد أدوا ذلك في أوقات الرخاء وأزمة الهدوء والصفاء.
وفعلوا ذلك أيضا في غمرة الحروب وإبان الكساد وفي أوقات النزاعات الكبيرة والنضال الشديد. [النص كاملا](#)

[The State of the Union Address, A Tradition Since 1790](#)

The **State** of the **Union** Address, A Tradition Since 1790.

From Time to Time: The State of the Union Address by Robert Longley – U.S. Government

Information – web link: <http://usgovinfo.about.com/od/thepresidentandcabinet/a/souhistory.htm>

The President's State of the Union Message: Frequently Asked Questions, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report, March 7, 2006 – web link:

<http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/stateoftheunion.pdf>

State of the Union Address: Origins and Authorization – Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives – web link: http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/stateunion.html

State of the Union Messages: 1790-2009, The American Presidency Project – web link:

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/sou.php>

The United States at Copenhagen

Remarks by President Obama on Copenhagen Agreement



REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT DURING PRESS AVAILABILITY

President Obama addressed the international climate change conference in Copenhagen on December 18.

Bella Center
Copenhagen, Denmark

10:30 P.M. CET

THE PRESIDENT: Let me start with a statement and then I'll take a couple of questions.

Today we've made meaningful and unprecedented -- made a meaningful and unprecedented breakthrough here in Copenhagen. For the first time in history all major economies have come together to accept their responsibility to take action to confront the threat of climate change.

Let me first recount what our approach was throughout the year and coming into this conference. To begin with, we've reaffirmed America's commitment to transform our energy economy at home. We've made historic investments in renewable energy that have already put people back to work. We've raised our fuel efficiency standards. And we have renewed American leadership in international climate negotiations. [Full transcript](#)

[More coverage](#)

[More articles on Climate Change](#)

Other sites of interest:

UN Climate Change Conference: <http://en.cop15.dk/>

Act on Copenhagen: <http://www.actoncopenhagen.decc.gov.uk/en/>

HAITI: Relief & Recovery

"We are trying to meet the humanitarian needs in this period, while at the same time working with the Haitian Government, the UN, and other countries and organizations to plan for the longer term." --Secretary Clinton, Jan. 26, 2010



Techies Put Their Laptops to Work for Haiti



In Washington, tech-savvy volunteers at CrisisCamp Haiti add street names to satellite maps to aid rescue workers.

By Christopher Connell
Special Correspondent

Washington — One of the newest applications for iPhones in the Apple Store is a free Creole-to-English and English-to-Creole translator called the Tradui aimed at a niche market: the thousands of relief workers on the front lines of the massive relief effort in Haiti.

The app was built by one of the volunteer squads of technology wizards who turned out for a "CrisisCamp Haiti" in Washington held days after a massive earthquake devastated the Haitian capital. More than a dozen of these brainstorming and code-writing sessions now have been held in cities across the United States and Canada and in London and Bogotá, Colombia. Still more are planned for the weeks ahead. [Read more](#)

More coverage:

[U.S. Military Helped Search-and-Rescue Efforts in Haiti](#)

[U.S. Intensifies Efforts to Prevent Human Trafficking in Haiti](#)

[U.S.-Donated Radios Get the Word Out in Haiti](#)

[Secretary Clinton's Interview with American Urban Radio Networks](#)

[الجيش الأميركي ساعد في جهود البحث والإنقاذ في هايتي](#)

[مسؤولون في وزارتي الخارجية والدفاع يشرحون الجهود المبذولة في هايتي](#)

[منظمات الإغاثة الأميركية الإسلامية تواصل جهود الإغاثة من الزلزال في هايتي](#)

Consular News

Consular Webchat!



The Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Damascus will hold a webchat on

**Thursday, February 04
from 3:30 pm
to 4:30 pm**

The live chat will provide an online forum for talking with Consular Officers about the visa process for visiting or immigrating to the United States.

Start submitting your questions now.
Just follow these steps:

1. Go to
<https://statedept.connectsolutions.com/damascus/>

Your computer will need Adobe Flash Player. If you do not already have Adobe Flash Player installed, you may download it for free at <http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>

2. Log in as a "Guest." Please type your name or initials into the space provided.

3. Once in the chat room you will see a "question" box on the screen. This is where you can type in your questions.

A full transcript will be posted after the chat.



We look forward to a lively and informative discussion!

Submit your questions now:
<https://statedept.connectsolutions.com/damascus/>

U.S. Embassy Consular section did a webchat on November 12 about the visa process for visiting or immigrating to the United States.

To read the full transcript, please visit [Embassy website](#).

Here are excerpts of this webchat:

Q: [Mohannad]: what kind of VISAs do I have to get in order to work in the USA??

A: [Mark Goldrup]: There are actually several types of visas that would allow you to work in the United States, depending on what type of work you plan to do. The most common "employment visa" is the H-1B. In order to get an H-1B visa, you must first have a job offer from a sponsoring company or organization within the U.S. The sponsoring organization will file a petition on your behalf. Once that petition is approved, you can be interviewed at the Embassy to determine whether a visa may be issued. For the most part, H-1B visas are only given to applicants in certain specialized jobs.

Q: [Hafez]: Hi, I am thinking of doing PhD in some university? What does it cost? What university do you recommend? Is there cheap university that can I do my PhD and work in it at the same time, since I have master degree? Thank you

A: [Mark Goldrup]: Great question! Our embassy has two educational advisors whose job is to help Syrians study in the U.S. There are a lot of great PhD programs in the U.S. in all fields. Costs vary quite a lot depending on where you go and scholarships may be in option for you. You could also possibly apply for teaching assistant or research assistant positions to help with tuition fees. We'd be happy to guide you towards the right university depending on your interests.

Study in the USA!

The U.S. Embassy's Educational Advising and Testing Office (EATO) provides advice on how to study in the U.S. and administers the following standardized tests:

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)
ITP (Institutional TOEFL)
TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication)
SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test)
GRE (Graduate Record Exam)

EATO also provides information on other tests such as the GMAT, GED, USMLE, CMA, and others. **Please feel free to contact us with any questions you have!**

Tel: 33914171, 33914172

Fax: 3331878

<http://damascus.usembassy.gov/eato2.html>

February Testing Schedule

GRE General	Saturday, February 6, 2010
ITP	Tuesday, February 9, 2010
TOEIC	Wednesday, February 24, 2010
ITP	Thursday, February 25, 2010

Scholarships and Fellowships:

Ramapo College will provide an \$80,000 Presidential Scholarship to qualified international students commencing their studies in the fall of 2010. The minimum requirements for selection are: 3.5 high school GPA and SAT scores of at least 1230 in Critical Reading and Mathematics. For more information, see the college's website (www.ramapo.edu/international) or email a representative: radhikar@ramapo.edu.

Williams College is soliciting applications for two Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellowships in Environmental Studies. Candidates must have completed a PhD within the 5 years prior to the program start date of July 1, 2010. Please visit the college's website for more information: <http://www.williams.edu>.

The World Wildlife Fund-US is pleased to announce the application period for the Kathryn Fuller Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships for 2010. The fellowships will support research in ecosystem services; measuring and monitoring carbon stocks in forests; and climate change impacts on and adaptation of freshwater resources. For more information, please visit the Fuller Fellowship webpage: <http://www.worldwildlife.org/science/fellowships/fuller/item1296.html>.

Macalester College is soliciting applications for a two-year Wallin Postdoctoral Faculty Fellowship for recent PhD graduates who focus on the Islamic world. Applications received by November 15th, 2009 will receive first consideration. For more information, please visit the college's website: www.macalester.edu/internationalstudies.

The Chris Byars Jazz Quartet

The Chris Byars Jazz Quartet returned to Damascus December 14 – 18, combining performances and master classes to inspire a new generation of musicians. The New York based quartet used a blend of music and discussion to strengthen students' understanding that jazz represents a unique aspect of American culture, as well as its historical and cultural links with Syria and the Middle East. Cooperating with Syria's Higher Institute of Music, the quartet shared their expertise with young Syrian musicians in guest lectures, as well as inviting students to participate in their performances. The three performances featured classical American jazz as well as the Quartet's jazz interpretations of traditional Syrian music.

The Quartet also performed at AAMAL, the Syrian Organization for the Disabled, during their trip. The organization focuses on awareness, advocacy, research, and services for Syrians with autism and the visually or hearing impaired. The concert allowed over 100 children who receive AAMAL services, as well as their teachers and therapists, to listen to music, bond with the musicians, and share their own musical talent and aspirations. The concert also provided an opportunity to strengthen the Public Affairs Section's relationship with AAMAL, and continue to create opportunities like this in the future.



How to Study in the US:

Educational Advising for Syrian Students

The Public Affairs Section hosted Kristen Cammarata, Regional Educational Advisor for North Africa and the Middle East, in what was originally envisioned as a two-day, public seminar on "How to Study in the U.S.," but lack of permission from the Syrian Government forced us to design an alternate program. Combining personal advising opportunities, meeting large groups of students at high schools, and connecting with people heavily invested in furthering Syrian education, Ms. Cammarata counseled students, parents, teachers, and education administrators not only on how to apply to undergraduate and graduate programs in the US, but also how to prepare oneself to become a competitive applicant in the large pool of international applicants.

Ms. Cammarata individually counseled over 60 Syrian students inside our still closed Cultural Center, and met with another 70 students during her visits to three Damascene high schools. Students' questions ranged from selecting undergraduate and graduate programs to admission procedures to scholarship and financial aid opportunities. The mission-wide event included a session with Consular Chief on the student visa process, a Senior English Language Fellow on writing an admission essay, and Embassy personnel shared their individual stories of studying in the US with students.

Anti-Bribery Convention Has Made a Difference

Siemens AG is only the latest in a string of companies prosecuted under national laws related to the OECD anti-bribery convention.



By Patrick Moulette

Paris — Bribing public officials to obtain business advantages in international transactions carries a stigma and exposes corporations and their executives to an increased risk of successful prosecution, thanks to the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions. [Read more](#)

Entrepreneurs from Muslim World Sought for Washington Summit

The 2010 summit follows up on President Obama's pledge in Cairo to find ways to deepen ties between the U.S. and the Muslim world.

By Stephen Kaufman



Approximately 150 entrepreneurs from Muslim-majority countries and Muslim communities around the world will be invited to a two-day summit in Washington in spring 2010 to meet with their peers and U.S. officials to explore areas of partnership and ways to drive economic and social innovation.

Deputy Secretary of Commerce Dennis Hightower told reporters at Washington's Foreign Press Center November 23 that the Presidential Summit on Entrepreneurship is a "direct follow-up" from [President Obama's June 4 commitment](#) in Cairo to "identify how we can deepen ties between the business leaders, foundations and social entrepreneurs in the U.S. and Muslim communities around the world." [Read more](#)

الحكومة الأميركية تسعى إلى دعوة 150 رجل أعمال مسلما لحضور قمة أعمال في واشنطن

واشنطن - ستتم دعوة حوالي 150 رجل أعمال من الدول ذات الأغلبية الإسلامية والمجتمعات الإسلامية في أنحاء العالم المختلفة لحضور قمة تستغرق يومين في واشنطن في ربيع العام 2010 يلتقون فيها بنظرائهم الأميركيين ومسؤولين أميركيين لاستكشاف مجالات للشراكة بينهم والسبل التي من شأنها تحفيز الابتكار الاقتصادي والاجتماعي.

وأبلغ نائب وزير التجارة الأميركي دنيس هايتاور الصحفيين في مؤتمر صحفي عقده في نادي الصحافة الأجنبية في واشنطن يوم 23 تشرين الثاني/نوفمبر أن القمة الرئاسية للأعمال التجارية الخاصة التي ستعقد في واشنطن هي متابعة مباشرة لالتزام الرئيس أوباما في **خطابه يوم 4 حزيران/يونيو في القاهرة** الذي تعهد فيه الرئيس بالعمل على كيفية تعميق العلاقات بين الشخصيات القيادية في مجال العمل التجاري والمهني والمؤسسات وأصحاب المشاريع الابتكارية الاجتماعية في الولايات المتحدة وفي المجتمعات الإسلامية في جميع أنحاء العالم. [اقرأ المزيد](#)

Small-Business Innovation — A Role for Government

By Charles W. Wessner

A public-private partnership helps small businesses bring their innovations to market. Charles Wessner is director of technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship at the National Academies, which comprises groups of scientific experts that give advice to the federal government. This article appears in the November issue of eJournal USA, "Roots of Innovation."

Governments around the world are committing high-level policy attention and significant resources to the challenge of knowledge-based competition and growth. Success in this endeavor depends on effectively transforming national investments in research into competitive products for the market.

[Read more](#)

الابتكار في مؤسسات الأعمال الصغيرة- دور للحكومة

تكنولوجيا أشعة اكس الثلاثية الأبعاد المستعملة لمعاينة حمولة هذه الفواصة جرى تطويرها من قبل شركة صغيرة في ولاية

كاليفورنيا

بقلم تشارلز دبليو. ويسنر

تساعد الشراكة بين القطاعين العام والخاص مؤسسات الأعمال الصغيرة على

نقل ابتكاراتها إلى الأسواق. يشغل تشارلز ويسنر منصب مدير التكنولوجيا والابتكار ومشاريع الأعمال الخاصة لدى الأكاديميات القومية، التي تضم مجموعات من الخبراء العلميين الذين يقدمون استشاراتهم إلى الحكومة الفدرالية. سوف ينشر هذا المقال في عدد تشرين الثاني/نوفمبر من المجلة الالكترونية إي جورنال يو أس إي، "جذور الابتكار".

[اقرأ المزيد](#)



Blogs at America.gov

Blogs at America.gov offers readers a place to join in conversation on a variety of topics with experts from the United States and around the world. We encourage you to share your thoughts with our bloggers and fellow readers in the comments section of each post. Click on the title in blue to go to the website.



Climate Expert Debate Nuclear Energy:

Point: Patrick Moore of [Greenspirit Strategies Ltd.](#) argues that nuclear power is clean, reliable and the only alternative to match and exceed the generating capacity of fossil fuels.

Counter point: Sharon Squassoni of the [Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#) believes nuclear power is not without weapons risks, and its cost and build-out time make it a partial solution at best.

[Join the Debate](#)



New Enterprise:

Moving from an idea to a successful venture. It takes the right business climate. Does the government protect your intellectual property? What does your community do to encourage entrepreneurs?

[Join the Discussion](#)



E-Journal USA: A monthly electronic journal available in multiple languages about U.S. foreign affairs and U.S. society and culture.

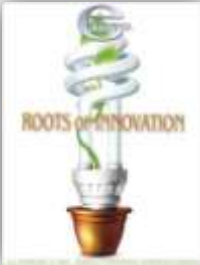
اي جورنال يو إس إيه: مجلة إلكترونية شهرية تصدر بعدة لغات تتناول شؤون الولايات المتحدة الخارجية والمجتمع الأمريكي وثقافته.



Governance and Growth

"Governance and Growth," explores the reality behind President Obama's statement to Ghana's parliament earlier this year: "Development depends on good governance."

[Inside this publication](#)



Roots of Innovation

Economic expansion depends more and more on innovation — not simply producing more goods and services, but producing ever newer goods and services. This issue of eJournal USA seeks to show that innovation needs the right conditions to emerge. [Inside this publication](#)

جذور الابتكار

أصبح يُنظر إلى الابتكار بصورة متزايدة على أنه يُشكّل عنصراً أساسياً للاقتصادات والحكومات على حد سواء. والاقتصادات المتوسعة لم تعد تنتج كميات أكبر من المنتجات ذاتها، بل أعداداً أكبر من المنتجات الجديدة ذات القيمة المضافة. هذا العدد من إي جورنال يو إس إيه يستكشف بعض الظروف الملائمة لتشجيع الابتكار. [في هذه المطبوعة](#)



National Parks, National Legacy

The people of the United States own and protect a sprawling system of national parks, including seashores, trails, monuments, and battlefields. All American citizens are, in a sense, stewards of sites where history unfolded, where mountains soar, and where rivers run. They keep these parks for the future, and they treasure them today. [Inside this publication](#)

المتنزهات القومية: الإرث القومي

يملك المواطنون الأمريكيون نظاماً من المتنزهات القومية المنتشرة في أنحاء البلاد يشمل الشواطئ والجبال والنصب التذكارية وساحات المعارك ويحافظون عليها. جميع المواطنين الأمريكيين، إلى حد ما، مسؤولون عن إدارة المواقع التي تشكلت فيها صفحات التاريخ، حيث ترتفع الجبال الشامخة وتنساب الأنهر. وهم يحافظون على هذه المتنزهات للمستقبل، ويتعاملون معها اليوم ككنز ثمين.

[في هذه المطبوعة](#)

Photo Gallery and Videos

Offering an audio-visual tour of the stories and issues shaping our world, the photo gallery and videos are two of many invaluable services "America.gov" offers for its audience. Both the gallery and videos can be browsed by the following subjects: American Life, Economy, Global Challenges, and International Relations.

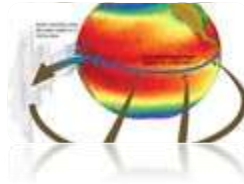
Photo Gallery: Please simultaneously click on any picture and the "Ctrl" key to take you to the gallery you want to see or go to the link below to see more photo collections.
<http://www.america.gov/multimedia/photogallery.html#7a78bf28-e356-4d21-a311-0c218ec8f6f8>

International Relations



President Obama: Year One Highlights

Global Challenges



Understanding Climate Modeling

American Life



Winter Celebrations

Videos: Please simultaneously click on any picture and the "Ctrl" key to take you to the video you want to watch or go to the link below to see all the video collection.
<http://www.america.gov/multimedia/video.html?playerId=1475282956>

COP15 Spain Displays Climate Media



02:57

St. Petersburg and Washington students on nonproliferation



05:04

بيان من لجنة جوائز نوبل عن منح الرئيس أوباما جائزة نوبل للسلام



02:22

Resources for Research

[A People's History of the United States](#) is frequently used by U.S. History teachers in schools around the country because Zinn tells the history of the United States in a story that it is often different from that told in textbooks. A People's History of the United States to give students an alternative perspective on history.

The [Zinn Education Project www.zinnedproject.org/](http://www.zinnedproject.org/) is a website designed to help teachers use A People's History of the United States in their classrooms. The [Zinn Education Project](#) provides complete lesson plans for use in elementary school, middle school, and high school settings. In some cases the lesson plans include document excerpts and references to A People's History of the United States. You can search for lesson plans by time period, theme, or by student reading levels.

Conflict Resolution Issues from U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP):

<http://www.usip.org/issue-areas>

Cogent political and economic analyses of the major boiling international issues of the day may be found at USIP: http://origin.usip.org/on_the_issues/

It includes interviews with experts on the issues.

You may see the issue for example on Women, Conflict and Peace Building.

http://origin.usip.org/on_the_issues/women.html

City Data - Essential Statistics about U.S. Cities: A free directory of statistics about U.S. Cities.

<http://www.city-data.com/>

The type of data sets that you will find on City Data includes all the typical information you'd expect to find like housing prices, demographic data, and job data. City Data also provides information about things like cell phone coverage, quality and availability of public transportation, air quality, how livable the city is, and essential cost of living stats. Includes comments from residents of the city to give an idea how it is to live there. The data is arranged in list form and in graph/ chart form.

To download this issue of the IRC newsletter and previous issues, visit the IRC webpage: <http://damascus.usembassy.gov/irc.html>.

**Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments!
011-3391-4118/3391-4195 or ircdamas@state.gov/ircdamas@gmail.com**